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Tass on the Job

The Washington bureau of Tass, the official Soviet news agency, is not letting any grass grow under its feet. Certainly the man in charge—Mikhail R. Sagatelyan—has shown splendid initiative in connection with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and its inquiry into the whys and wherefores of the downing of our U-2 "spy plane" deep inside Russia.

At any rate having heard of the committee's decision to publish censored copies of the testimony before it, Mr. Sagatelyan has lost not a minute in ordering the official transcripts. These promise to be highly informative, and they should cost the Kremlin only a few dollars, relatively speaking. The whole thing, obviously, will be a tremendous bargain in that sense—so much so that Mr. Sagatelyan, if he has the heart of a sport, or is under instructions from the blow-hot-blow-cold Kremlin to ease tensions temporarily in Washington, ought to order drinks on the house for everybody he happens to find in the Press Club bar.

Anyhow, an American correspondent would do the same in Moscow if the Kremlin served up little tidbits of information about a similar investigation into Nikita Khrushchev's conduct of affairs before, during and after the abortive summit conference in Paris. Why can't we have this sort of reciprocity? We pause for reply from Moscow, and also from Mr. Sagatelyan right here in our own home town.

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